

Even a Moses and a David who were political and national giants as well as religious heroes though not to be compared with the grand spiritual beacons which were an Isaiah or Jeremiah, did not invade the land of the Canaanites because of their worship of Baal. We must grant a Moses the intelligence to know that Baal-religion is only the worship of God under a different name. But he and his people fell upon the Canaanites and were able to subdue them for the licentious corruptions into which they, as a people, had fallen. The Christians, too, were able to conquer Rome and assimilate it into their system not by reason of the state worship of Rome with its galleries of (anthropomorphic) deities, but because the citizenry of Rome and its subjects had become weak and enfeebled through excess of immorality and corruption.

When decadence of a people sets in, when their strength and unity is undermined, invasion follows and they are taken over by a conqueror. In other words, no nation ever falls and no people were ever destroyed because of their peculiar religion. They are rather conquered because of the deterioration of its people from virtue. They expose themselves to invasion; unwittingly they invite it, and this is so for every people, even those who boast of the greatest material progress.

So that a Moses was able to justify his aggressions by reason of the idolatry and corruption of the Canaanites as people, not as worshippers of God. It is never a question of religion.

The great spiritual seers spoke not against ^{any} religion but against the decadence into which they had fallen. They never spoke against the true religious spirit of any denomination or creed, but against the decadence into which they had fallen and deteriorated. But if they spoke of them at all, it was to warn of the decadence that eroded the true religious thought. A Christ did not speak against Judiasm, a Lat-Tse spoke not against Confucianianism, a Buddha did not inveigh against any of the multitude of Aryan faiths. In Christ's own words: "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." (Mark II, 17). (See Luke, -P.1102 Modern Readers.) (I came not to deny but to fulfill the law). And Socrates: "I came not to destroy the gods but to purify their worship: See: Trial).

P1115

The Priest comes between the
living god and man with their
symbols. This, I am sure, will
seem a barbaric madness to humanity
except as they understand the use
of the symbol. When we outgrow
the symbol —

all unhappiness, all unrest comes
from our confusing of the symbol with the
thing ~~to~~ itself. When we confuse the
separation with the external object;
we feel no separation. We exploit ourselves
when we confuse thought with the

P 116 1
philosophers who take great pride in the attempt to snatch a mote from the Infinite in order to subject it to their fanciful criticisms. As phantasmal as it may seem, there are many groups and societies who in the name of truth constantly attempt to disprove matters of no fundamental importance. Every now and then, the question as to whether or not Shakespeare is the author of the famous writings commonly ascribed to him becomes the subject of heated debate. Recently, a number of people belonging to such a society became so rattle-headed on this subjected that they decided to search for his grave in the hope of unearthing a little note telling of the real author. They hoped that an initiate might have dropped it into the grave during the funeral ceremony; an initiate who might have known the "facts". In their zeal, they proceeded with a mass-excavation.

But before they were able to identify the grave of the great writer, the government had to stop them from plowing up the entire cemetery.

You may ask, what has all this to do with your question. It does in this respect; as far as the inner life is concerned, our direct affinity with it is so scattered and fragmentary that a correctness in understanding with others is in the majority of instances highly improbable.

But be of good cheer. Everything can teach us even if we do not derive the anticipated results thereof.

Am enclosing the poems you asked for and trust that they are the ones you described to me in your last letter.

as for your friend's thinking himself to be an unbeliever,

P. 1115
this does not mean that he has no belief of his own. His immediate desires which are most urgent within him certainly form his belief although he may never have questioned himself seriously about this matter. Usually, a person who fancies himself an atheist is one who rejects commonly accepted beliefs. But this is not difficult to understand. Words belonging to the category of God and truth have been so long abused by those whose interests have in the main been in contradiction to their words that now a sincere and realistic appreciation of their functional significance is usually dismissed. There remains little understanding of their functional-significance symbolic quality.

P. 1115
The term symbolic, of course, begs the question the approach to whose meaning, now somewhat obscure to us, lies in non-intermittent search in connection with the uncovering and deciphering of values. In order that the nature of our consciousness which, so important in all that we do and say, may become comprehensible to us, it is desirable that we attempt to realize the possibility for harmony and balance in ourselves; possibilities whose fluid and pliable properties never crystallized out in final precipitation.

P. 1115
The psychic reaction productive of growth in the understanding of such questions as God and truth can never occur without profound feeling and emotion. This leads to understanding unless, of course, we are such keen exploiters of the obvious that the more revealing seldom, if ever, engages our attention. Infrequently do we direct sufficient attention to the meaning of our behavior; it is deemed more satisfying to concentrate upon immediate gratification and the means that will contribute thereto. We fail to see that all major beginnings and changes in life are difficult for us; that happiness is seldom realized without great effort.

P. 1115
Generally people who believe themselves to be atheists and unbelievers are persons who cannot understand the simpler phenomena around and in them but who are always ready to master the difficult aspects of their environment by means of outright denials. I recollect just such a turn of idiosyncrasy in connection with a wealthy acquaintance of mine. He called himself an atheist and was the head of an organization that published its own periodical. In this magazine certain passages in the Bible were criticised and their authenticity questioned. Did such and such a saint perform a certain miracle when historically, he could not have done so at the time not having lived then? The existence of Christ as a person was questioned.

P. 1116
Obviously, my friend who had written these passages was not and could not have been concerned with the full meaning of Christ, not as person vehicle of desires and emotions but as an impersonal expression of as magnificent wisdom as man can ever hope to achieve. This friend lacked knowledge and eagerness. Such qualities were decidedly lacking in the good gentlemen for while he has a nice person, he was apparently very suspicious of what he could not immediately understand.

This is merely an example of how a more primitive type of emotion can distort our views in creating narrow attitudes which too often are mistaken for thought. There are charlatans

p. 285 Dewey

The Quest for Certainty

"The philosophical tradition regarding knowledge and practice, the immaterial or spiritual and the material, was not original and primitive. It had for its background the state of culture which has been sketched. It developed in a social atmosphere in which the division of the ordinary and extraordinary was domesticated. Philosophy reflected upon it and gave it a rational formulation and justification."

The conception of the ultimate or antecedent real is not a ~~crea~~ creation of the culture of society was was always inherent in man. the thinking and feeling of the human entity. It underwent changes and development through the ages but essentially always held the same basic aim. From the very beginning of man he could nothhelp but think of a god because of the god-instinct in him. He tried to make intelligable (to himself) that instinct. He tried to explain from the very beginning the god-instinct in him. He did not create a god as a non-existing ~~entity~~ since the seed-reality in him was driving him from the very beginning to seek it.

With the emergence of man, nature impressed him with such awe that primitive as he was, he thought of a God. But that he could be so impressed points to a supreme reality which through the suggestion of vast powers in natural phenomena implied to him the existence of an infinite greatness. That which is symbolized by the word God must have been instinctive knowledge in him, otherwise he could not have endowed anything in nature with omnipotence.

Mana, God, ultimate, infinite, universal- all these are but word constructions hinting at that supreme reality to which every path of human activity seems to lead.

Religious personifications of
deity

god-instinct in man.

Prayer - for what he should pray.

The conception of the spiritual real is not the creation
of a state of culture, ^{belonging} for it is inherent in the thinking and
~~and feeling of all men whose~~
~~who, in association, produces a state of culture or society.~~
^{can the supernatural, so called, be said to be}
Only incidentally, then, is it, as Dewey writes, the production
of "a social atmosphere in which the division of the ordinary
(relative) and extraordinary (absolute) was domesticated".
~~for~~ With the emergence of man he could not help but think of
a god because of the god-instinct in him. From the very beginning
he tried to make intelligible to himself that instinct, though
~~As he was able to do so, he~~
~~it was the philosopher especially who~~ "reflected upon it and
gave it a rational formulation and justification." Though
The conception of the immaterial real underwent ^{much} change and
development over ^{during which} eons of history, ~~man, the conceiver of gods,~~
was driven by the seed-reality in him to seek and to know the
god enshrined in every temporal existence.

Why could early man be impressed with such awe that prim-
itive as he was, he thought of a god? That he was so impressed
points to a supreme reality which, ^{rough} the suggestion of vast
powers present in natural phenomena, implied to him the
existence of infinite greatness. That greatness he symbolized
by the word god, wisdom, or heaven which, ~~on the subjective~~
~~side,~~ must have been instinctive knowledge in him; otherwise
he could not have endowed anything in the objective world with
omnipotence.

October 28th, 1947

P. 402. Cunningham.

~~This author makes the statement~~ ^{there are some who hold} that belief in God is ^{immanent in all} a quite natural belief, and that it is a mistake to suppose that the belief is an artificial creation of scheming priests or medicine-men who hoped, by its means to get control of the masses. ^{who as the substitution} But ~~he gives no evidence~~ for this statement other than ~~to point to the commonness of this belief in various times and climes?~~ (AY) → 10-30-47

A small soul has never been known to produce ^{or entertain} great ideas. It is ^{only} gross-grained intellects, ~~.... It is~~ ^{clever brains} small minds with clever intellects, that will exploit great ideas and try to make them serve ^{narrowly conceived aims} their smaller personal motives. Thus they ^{are always used for} will use ^{sordid} great ideas toward forwarding their narrow ends. (AY)

This is not to say that the jews as a people worshipped any better than those which were called by them heathens. For the worship is not better than the worshippers, and the heathens of that time, as people, were not inferior to the Hebrews in the exodus in their moral behavior. But the jews had greater leaders though these had even to resort to the slaughter of thousands of jews to restore the rest to some semblance of moral behavior. Thus, the slaughter of the 24,000 jews for what it described as whoring with the Moabites.

Not can the man of science forego the quest. The desideratum of knowledge of reality is not one's occupation, whether one is a scientist, or divine, a professor of sacred or secular science. It is a commonplace of philosophy to assert that Greek - and therefore European - civilization was "saved from a religion of the oriental type by the existence of the scientific schools".

~~But~~ Europe is as little saved as it is lost and it will ever be so. We should be much more sparing of our ideas of saving and losing since we understand so little about it. ^{the} If proponents of the mystical religions of the orient were fully as powerful in our western school systems as some of the spouting philosophers, they would also say, in the same ^{but with an opposite refrain} vein, "Europe would have been lost by reason of science were it not for the mystery schools - Pythagoreanism, Orphism, the worship of Bacchus, etc." And they would be just as right!

You can neither be lost or saved: you can only grow or not grow. You can get home by infinite ways of circumloquition, or by a more direct line - a straight one. But home you must go as surely as all the waters of a river must flow downstream and not upstream. So with civilizations, whether eastern or western; they can either grow into ^{out of} self-rulership or relapse into self-seeking. ^{But} And in the main, whether in the occident or orient, under anarchic, democratic, or despotic regimes, the great masses are ^{usually} always sacrificed by the selfish who would rule the world for their own ends - which become their own end or the end of themselves.

Compare the masses of the east which die through not having

Understanding will of himself come: one must go to it since it is the greater thing. One must exert himself.

God cannot come to us, therefore we must go to him. But the lesser is always drawn to the greater. The magnet draws the iron.

When man is not willing, the magnetism of god works against him, against his resistance, his home his property, his little gods.

And so the god in us must undergo million and millions of evolutions. Of what value is the great man? Only to himself has he worth. He is willing to make the effort to attain to god. If not, he cannot come to god, not as a god but as a friend.

Who is it who can truly ask; without mere
curiosity; but with real effort, "Is there a god?"
Only he who is godlike and he will not ask anymore.
He will know; at first fleetingly; at rare intervals
which are like piercing pains: then constancy will
come.

"In God's good time says the
selfish person." But woe to him

when "God's good time" changes
things.

~~The same thing for the same thing~~

Let us consider the lazy glow-worm
 who, comfortable in its tunnel, merely desires
 to share there. It is knowing a brighter
 light since it is unwilling to exert
 itself by coming to the surface, the
 beetle may dream that is not only light
 but the source of all light. Since the
 cunning of self-illusion outside
 everything else in its world, it may
 cease to be aware of any thing finer
 than itself. and when that dream has
 become habitual, it slips into the
 greatest ease into the ^{earthy} chamber of
 the little god ego; the one who in
 falling from his throne, was changed into
 the form of a body of a body with a tail,
 horns, and a cloven hoof by the god
 whom he tried to outshine but could not.

Even a Moses and a David who were political and national giants as well as religious heroes though not to be compared with the grand spiritual beacons which were an Isaiah or Jeremiah, did not invade the land of the Canaanites because of their worship of Baal. We must grant a Moses the intelligence to know that Baal-religion is only the worship of God under a different name. But he and his people fell upon the Canaanites and were able to subdue them for the licentious corruptions into which they, as a people, had fallen. The Christians, too, were able to conquer Rome and assimilate it into their system not by reason of the state worship of Rome with its galleries of (anthropomorphic) deities, but because the citizenry of Rome and its subjects had become weak and enfeebled through excess of immorality and corruption.

When decadence of a people sets in, when their strength and unity is undermined, invasion follows and they are taken over by a conqueror. In other words, no nation ever falls and no people were ever destroyed because of their peculiar religion. They are rather conquered because of the deterioration of its people from virtue. They expose themselves to invasion; unwittingly they invite it, and this is so for every people, even those who boast of the greatest material progress.

So that a Moses was able to justify his aggressions by reason of the idolatry and corruption of the Canaanites as people, not as worshippers of God. It is never a question of religion.